

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

INX

Support person present: No

1. My name is INX. That was the name I was known by throughout my time in care. My date of birth is 1947. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. My mother was called . She was from a fishing family who lived in Arbroath in Angus. All her family before her were 'fisher people'. The men went out to sea and the women smoked fish, mended nets or baited lines. My father's name was . His parents owned a big market garden called . It was located just outside of Montrose. My father chose to go into farming at an early age. He was a cattleman on various farms over the course of my early childhood. It was pre-tractor days when Clydesdale horses were used instead of machinery. He entered world championship ploughing contests with the horses. Looking back, it took a lot of pulling to get him away from his horses and into the new age of machinery.
3. I was born in Arbroath Infirmary. My parents would have been married by the time of my birth. However, they wouldn't have been married very long. They went on to have five further children. We all seemed to go in twos like animals in Noah's Ark. I am the oldest followed by my brother , and I shared the same childhood. My next youngest siblings are and . Like and I, they paired together. My very youngest siblings are and . There was a further child, I think, between and who sadly passed away. There is about a seven year gap

between the oldest and youngest sibling. We were brought up as Scottish Episcopalians and that continued into my time in care.

4. I remember living with my parents and siblings for quite some time in my early childhood. My memories are all vivid of that time. I remember my father quite well. I remember rushing home from school to see him whilst he was working. I knew that if I found him, he would just be finishing. He would unhook the horses from their plough, or whatever they were attached to, and sit me on one of their backs. The horse would know the way home to the stables and I would ride it back. I really used to enjoy that. I never did tell my father that the horses used to stop for a drink of water from a trough on their way back. There would be me holding onto the verge of a precipice as they took their water. I used to hang on for dear life until they turned and went into their stables. I remember that the stable entrance was that low that I had to lay flat when the horses went in. I kept all of that from my father because I knew, that if I told him any of that, he would have stopped me riding the horses back to the stables.
5. I went to several primary schools over the course of my early childhood. My father changed jobs quite a lot so, as he went from farm to farm, we went from school to school. I think the root of all of that was a lot of the farms were modernising and replacing horses with tractors. I think my father was a bit 'oldy worldy' and preferred the horses. I attended at least three schools, but it could easily have been more. All that led to my education inevitably being disrupted. The last primary school I attended was a primary school in [REDACTED] in Perthshire. I remember walking to and from the school back to the farm where we stayed.
6. Looking back at my early childhood, I had a normal happy life. I remember the dark nights because there was no electricity and it was all gas lamps and candles. However, I also remember our father telling us stories, singing and playing us the mouth organ. We were quite happy in that way. There was nothing like the authorities or welfare being involved with our family at that time.
7. My father then, sadly, got killed in a road accident by a drunk driver. He was thirty eight years old when he passed away. I would have been about ten years old when

that happened. My mother was left with six children on her own and two of them were very young. My youngest sister would have been about two and my youngest brother would have been about one. At that time, we were living in a cottage called [REDACTED] Cottage on a farm called [REDACTED] Farm. We had to leave the house because the cottage we were staying in was tied to my father's job. Our mother wasn't the strongest of people and understandably couldn't cope. She asked her family and her sister whether they could help. In the end, my mother's sister, Auntie [REDACTED], agreed to let us stay with her in her flat in Arbroath for a couple of nights. I remember we were all sleeping on chairs and on the floor.

8. The reality was that my Auntie [REDACTED] couldn't look after six children. The welfare came to visit us at Auntie [REDACTED]'s house and took us away. I don't think welfare had been in existence all that long by that time. I don't remember the name of the welfare officers but there was more than one. It was a man and a woman. Looking back, I was ten years old and didn't understand what was happening. I shudder to think what my younger siblings were thinking. We were assured by our welfare officers that we would be taken care of, fed and clothed because our mother couldn't cope. I was more concerned about what was going to happen with our mother than anything else.
9. We were all taken to Aberlour after the welfare officers visited us. I think we took the train. It was quite a distance back then to travel. I don't really have any further memories surrounding the day that we were taken to the orphanage. Everything was changing overnight. It was all happening too fast for me to take things in.

Aberlour Orphanage, Aberlour, Banffshire

10. I was in Aberlour on two separate occasions. I first went there when I was about ten years old. That would mean I went there in either 1957 or 1958. I was there for between eighteen months and two years so I would have left somewhere between 1959 and 1960. Aberlour was self-sufficient. It lived off charity rather than the government giving it any money.

11. After arriving at Aberlour we were all split up between various parts of the orphanage. My two youngest siblings, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], went to a separate building called, I think, St Margaret's Nursery. From then onwards I never saw them. My sister, [REDACTED], was placed in the girl's part of the orphanage. My brothers, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], were placed in an area of the orphanage for younger boys called 'The Little Boys.' I never really saw [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] during my first time at Aberlour. That was because you weren't allowed to go from one section or house to another. That just wasn't allowed. I wasn't, for instance, allowed to walk into The Little Boys even though that was in the same building I was in.
12. I remember what happened on my first day at Aberlour. You went between different departments, and they gave you clothes, sheets, a pillowcase and all that sort of thing. They then told you what your house was and who your housemaster would be. You were then taken to your dorm and made to make your bed before changing into the orphanage's clothes. Your own clothes and belongings were placed in a bag and taken away. The housemaster of Jupp House later told us what was happening and what the rules were. I don't recall what his name was. I don't think that was done on an individual basis. I think that was done once a week during an assembly in the assembly hall that was held for all those children who had come in that week. The housemaster explained all the rules, regulations and what you were expected to do there and then.
13. I don't really remember how I felt on my first day at Aberlour. It all felt like one big adventure. I didn't know what was going to happen next. I was apprehensive but I was a bit excited at the same time. Everything was new and like going on a vacation for the first time. It was like getting on a plane for the first time. It was a little bit scary, and some people were frightened around you, but at the same time you were excited about going on the journey. My memories are all vague and I don't really remember much about the first time I was at Aberlour. I think I was in a haze because of what had happened and was trying to get used to a new life. All the memories which I want to talk about in this statement are really from the second time that I was there. What I do remember about the first time I was there was that there was a lot of disruption. I think they were in the process of changing the Deans.

14. I remember there was quite a lot of confusion surrounding my age and what class I should be placed in when I first started at Aberlour. My younger brother, [REDACTED], was initially placed in the same class as me even though he was two years younger than me. I shouldn't have been in the same class as him because I was too old. That went on for an entire year. I remember saying to the teacher that I had already been taught what was being taught. The teacher would just tell me to stop speaking and to get on with my work. They eventually, at the end of that year, realised the mistake they had made. The following year they placed me in a year two years up. All of that meant that I missed an entire year of education. I missed all sorts of things like geometry and algebra because of that. I remember that when I was in that year I was repeatedly kept back at school because I wasn't getting those things right.

Leaving Aberlour the first time

15. Our mother came to visit us on one occasion during our first time there. She might have visited more than once but I am not sure. It was a long way for her to travel because she was living in Montrose by that time. I think she managed to take all of us out for the day. We were taken out for two or three hours for tea and biscuits. There's a photo of us all standing together at the war memorial in the centre of Aberlour. I understand that our mother kept asking welfare to have us placed in a home nearer to where she stayed so that she could visit us more often. That's how we all ended up being moved to Carolina House in Dundee. I don't have any memories surrounding the lead up to being taken to Carolina House or the transfer across there.

Carolina House, 133 Broughty Ferry Road, Dundee

16. I was between twelve and thirteen years old when I went to Carolina House. That means I would have arrived there at some point between 1959 and 1961. I wasn't there very long and left when I was either twelve or thirteen years old. It wasn't really

until I got to Carolina House that I realised that we were all going to stay in care until the time we were old enough to leave.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Aberlour Orphanage, Aberlour, Banffshire

48. I returned to Aberlour at some point between 1959 and 1961 when I was either twelve or thirteen years old. I left when I was sixteen in 1964. My memories are a lot more clearer surrounding routine, structure and incidents during my second time at Aberlour.

Layout of Aberlour

49. The grounds contained one large main building which was L-shaped. Separate from the main building was the school and the farm. There were various workshops where we did things. Beyond those was the building that contained the girls' section. I was never in there so I couldn't describe it. Further on from that was the church. St Margaret's Nursery, where all the very youngest children stayed, was in a separate building to the right of the main building about two miles away. I didn't even know it existed until after leaving Aberlour. I'm not sure whether St Margaret's could be classed as within the grounds, but it may well have been.
50. The house I was in, Jupp House, was in the main building. The ground floor consisted of the day area. There was an assembly room which was the biggest room in the building. There was a boot room where everybody used to assemble to get changed before going out. Also on that floor was the dining hall, the kitchen and what we called a living room. The living room was used for boys to play boardgames and things like that. It was just a place to hang out. Round the corner on the ground floor was where The Little Boys were housed. That was to the back of the building. We weren't allowed in there so I couldn't describe the layout there. Also round the corner was where BGF's quarters were located.
51. All the dormitories were located upstairs in the main building. I'm sure everybody from Jupp House slept together in one dormitory. It was quite a long room which contained something like sixty beds. We had our own infirmary where you would be sent if you were sick or injured. That was located at the far end of our dormitory. I spent quite some time in there. At the other end of the dormitory were the housemaster's quarters. I think the bathroom was between the dormitory and the housemaster's quarters, but

I might be wrong on that. I think the other house, which contained older boys, ran alongside our own facilities to the back of the building.

Staff structure

52. The Dean was the person who oversaw Aberlour. The next rung down from the Dean were the housemasters. Each housemaster oversaw their own group of children. Below the housemasters were their lieutenants. I can't remember what they were officially called but they were second in command and did all the dogsbody work. There was also a matron who would work in the infirmary attached to the dorms. Separate from the houses was the headmaster, teachers and sports masters who all worked in the school.

Staff

53. BLK [REDACTED] was SNR [REDACTED] during the first time I was at Aberlour. I can't really remember him, but I may have talked to him. I didn't really know him as such. BGF [REDACTED] BGF [REDACTED] later [REDACTED]. That might have happened whilst I was at Aberlour the first time I was there.
54. I can't remember who my housemaster was during the first time I was at Aberlour. Captain Henry was my housemaster throughout the second time I was there. He oversaw Jupp House. He was American and drove a big American car. He was a big, tall heavy overweight guy. I'd imagine he was over six foot tall. He might have been in his forties. He was a real 'showboating' type of man who came across to those who didn't know him as a real benefactor to Aberlour.

Siblings

55. I had limited contact with my siblings during my time at Aberlour. They kept you all separated. You weren't really allowed to speak to your siblings as and when you saw them around the grounds. The staff made that clear from the 'get go'. They told you that you weren't allowed to talk to you siblings unless you were with people who

required you to talk. Even then they didn't like that very much. I remember many a time when I was clipped around the back of my ear by staff when I was found talking to my sister or brother.

56. I only got to see my sister on Sundays when I was travelling to and from church. We only really got to say "Hi" from a distance. That was something that I wasn't really supposed to do. I wasn't there long enough for [REDACTED] to join me in Jupp House. I don't know whether he went into Jupp House after I left. I can't remember what happened there. However, I did get to speak to him on occasion outside of the main house. We would meet on the sports fields and things like that.

The children at Aberlour

57. There were both boys and girls at Aberlour. The ages ranged from babies right up to adolescents of the age of sixteen. I would estimate that there were between five hundred and six hundred children there in total. Put it this way, whenever you wanted a game of football there were always twenty two boys available to make two teams. Quite often there were more than that who wanted to play. The age range of the boys in the house I was in, Jupp House, was between ten or eleven and sixteen. It was quite a big age gap in terms of what stage the boys were in their development. A lot of the boys I was in the same house with were fourteen or fifteen years old when they had been taken into the orphanage. A lot of them had started smoking and things like that.
58. I spoke to some of my friends about how they ended up at Aberlour. There were lots of different reasons behind why children ended up there. A lot ended up there under similar circumstances as our own. They had either lost their parents or had lost one parent and the remaining parent couldn't cope. Some of the children had just decided to leave home and ended up being lifted off the streets. A lot of children had been in trouble with the police and, for whatever reason, ended up being sent to Aberlour rather than to juvenile offender institutions. I think, with those children, it was thought that if they were given a different upbringing it would provide them with different morals.

Houses and groups within Aberlour

59. The children in Aberlour were all separated into various groups and houses. It was done by gender and age. There were separate groups for the girls and very young children. The youngest children stayed in a nursery called, I think, St Margaret's Nursery. I think children stayed there up until the age of five or six years old. There was then a separate section in the main building for what they called 'The Little Boys.' I think the boys there were between five or six years old and about eleven years old.
60. I was in a section, or 'house', for boys over primary school age located in the main building. Each house contained about sixty boys. The house I was in was called 'Jupp House.' That was the house I was in over the course of both times I was at Aberlour. I don't remember being in any other house. I believe the house I was in was named after a former Dean of Aberlour. There was another house for older boys which I think was called 'Melrose House.' It was something that began with an 'M'. That house was just as big as Jupp House and contained boys of the same age.
61. The girls were housed in a separate building which I never went into. Going there was a big 'no no.' I don't know how that was all structured. They may have had separate sections within the house depending on what age the girls were.

Routine at Aberlour

First day

62. I don't really recall how I was feeling when I returned to Aberlour. I think, in all, it felt good to be there. Secondary Institutions - to be published later. I suppose to a certain extent, I had been grieving the first time I was at Aberlour. That led to me not paying attention to my surroundings so much, so I didn't have any bad memories when I returned. I was still in a bit of a fog surrounding all of that and not really paying attention to what was going on.

Daily routine

63. I think you were got up at about 7:00 am. You went in your pyjamas to the washroom to brush your teeth and washed before going to get dressed. I can't remember where you got dressed. We either went to another room or there was a locker by our beds which contained our PT kit. I remember that part of that kit was a leather belt. We then went down to the boot room and put on our running shoes. All the boys then had to go for a run. I remember a lot of the routes we took were old railway lines which had been shut down by Beeching. No matter what the weather was like, we had to do that run. The run might have been six or seven miles long in total. At the end of the run, we had to go over an assault course. That was where the leather belt we were wearing came into play. It was used to secure us when we would swing across on ropes. I remember being down on my knees and elbows going under nets and things like that. I remember coming back to the main house covered in mud. It all stood you in good stead though.
64. After getting changed we then went for our breakfast in the dining hall. You were then told by your housemaster what chores you had for the day and where you had to go in terms of classes. If you hadn't selected a more vocational thing to do, like carpentry, metalwork or cobbling, the housemaster would assign you to a particular place. Sometimes the housemaster would send you to a different place if the area you wanted to work was too full. If it was a more vocational thing you were doing you would have to get changed into overalls, or something like that, before going to your class.
65. You would then do your chores before spending the morning doing the class you had been assigned. There then followed lunch with the rest of the classes being held in the afternoon. In the evening we had our dinner in the dining hall. We'd watch a bit of television or go to the playroom to play boardgames after that. That would go on for a couple of hours before we had to go up to the dormitory for bedtime. We would have to wash and brush our teeth before we got into bed. Bedtime would have been at about 9:00 pm.

66. Every Saturday morning you were given pocket money of about sixpence. After that you were allowed to go into the village to spend your money at the store there. In the afternoon you got to play sports. We didn't have to go for a run on Sundays. Sundays were all about religion. There was a service in the church in the morning at either 10:00 am or 11:00 am. I remember that we had to dress up in Scottish regalia for the service. After the service we had to change into our day clothes. We were only really allowed to sit about reading after that. We then had to change back into our Scottish regalia for Evensong in the church in the evening. That was held at about 6:00 pm.

Sleeping arrangements

67. There were about sixty beds in our dorm. I think we may have each had a locker in the dorms but I'm not sure about that. All the boys of different ages were mixed in together. It was quiet at night in the dorm. I remember that you would get into trouble with the housemaster if you were caught talking. That meant everything was done in a whisper. Nobody wanted to take the chance of being heard.

Washing / bathing

68. We had a bath in the mornings after coming back from the assault course. It was baths in the bathroom. I think there were about eight baths in the room. I think they only introduced showers the last year I was at Aberlour. I remember that we had to share the bath water and that it wasn't changed between boys. You were getting cold water if you were the last boy in the bath. It was a bit like a sheep dip. The housemaster was usually standing there at the entrance of the bathroom making sure everyone went in. You never really had any privacy because it was all wide open.

Mealtimes / food

69. You had to queue up for your meals. You then had to sit at the table you had been assigned in the dining hall. It was just our house who ate together in the dining hall during mealtimes. There were about thirteen tables with about six at a table. It was

crowded at mealtimes in the dining hall. I remember that the room would be supervised by the housemaster and his deputy whilst we ate.

70. Breakfast consisted of mostly porridge but there was also cereal. Very occasionally you got bacon and beans or something like that. Sometimes it was just toast. They were pretty good with food. I can't recall whether you could ask for more food, but I don't think anybody went hungry. You were well fed. The quality of the food was fairly good. Looking back, I guess what you had food wise all depended on how well the orphanage was doing. You could always tell when they were on hard times. I remember times when you were only given boiled potatoes and a vegetable for a meal.
71. You did without if you didn't eat what they provided. Mostly it was a case of 'when in Rome' and you would just eat what was placed in front of you. They wouldn't have been giving you whatever it was if it wasn't nutritious. You weren't allowed to talk during mealtimes. The housemaster and deputy housemaster would patrol the tables and check that everybody was eating. There were times when children refused to eat their food, or were passing food between each other's plates, and were given slaps around the back of their heads by the housemaster or the deputy housemaster.

Work / chores

72. Everybody had chores to do at Aberlour. You did those irrespective of how well you were behaving. The chores were assigned by your housemaster after you came back from your morning run. You would have to do those chores before you went to your classes each day. There was a rota that would be put up. It would be things like washing a floor, dusting the bannisters, cleaning the bathroom and things like that. It was all different things. You might find that you had been assigned cleaning the toilets if you were bad. I felt ok doing chores and treated it as just being part of the day. On top of the chores, I learnt to knit, sew and how to darn socks. Looking back, doing those things alongside the chores was good for me because it taught me how to fend for myself during times I was on my own.

73. A lot of the money that Aberlour brought in by way of charity was through things the children did in the orphanage. Sometimes we would go out to collect jumble. We would go out in groups of five or six and bring it back to be sold at various sales. We would make things to be sold in jumble sales in some of the classes we took. It was all a way of the orphanage bringing in funds.

Clothing / uniform

74. We all wore the same clothes outside of classes. You lived in grey short trousers whether it be winter or summer. In the summer you might wear a short sleeve shirt. In the winter you might have a grey sweater on. During the day we usually wore overalls if we were in the workshops or working on the farm. Sometimes, depending on what you were doing, you just wore a brown shirt over the top of your clothes. On Sundays we wore all the Scottish regalia for going to church. It was kilts and all that type of thing.
75. If clothing was damaged, or got holes in them, we would have to sew or darn them. We had to mend our own stuff. If you grew out of something, and your housemaster said it was ok, you would have things replaced. I never experienced not getting things when I needed them. I always found the staff pretty accommodating in that respect.

Possessions / pocket money

76. Any belongings, or clothes you had on, were taken away after you arrived. After that you weren't allowed any possessions. To my knowledge you weren't even allowed photographs. It was all taken away.
77. Pocket money was given every Saturday morning. It was usually around about sixpence. I'm not sure where that money came from but some of it came from money we earned picking potatoes and berries. The amount you were given varied depending on how well you had behaved or been at school. You didn't receive any pocket money if you had really messed up.

School

78. Aberlour had their own schools. As far as I understood, they were run just how proper ordinary schools were run. We had different teachers for different subjects. However, the schools weren't what you would call 'certified.' That meant that you couldn't take the equivalent of GCSEs. I don't think there was an expectation, whether you were clever or not, that you would be working towards going on to further education. You just weren't given that opportunity. However, we were all literate. We could all read and write and do things like that. Looking back, what they wanted was for the boys to all end up in the forces. At the end of the day, we were all seen as good fodder for that. It was where the forces got their front line.
79. The teachers didn't listen to you much. At times, it was hard to speak to them and explain things. I had one good teacher during my time at Aberlour. Her name was Mrs McPherson. She was an English teacher. She was a good person. For some reason she thought I was very good at poetry and would try to propagate that. She'd give me subjects to write poetry about and things like that. I became a teacher's pet. I remember that Mrs McPherson lived in a trailer in the town. During the winter she would take me to her trailer and get me to spread coke and ashes underneath her caravan, so it didn't freeze. I did lots of jobs for her and felt chuffed that I had become friends with her.
80. As you got older there were more vocational classes rather than academic subjects. I mostly did carpentry when it came to the more vocational classes I took at school. I remember during one woodwork class we all secretly made sledges. We threw all the pieces out the window and built them outside of class. We took our sledges to a friend in the metal shop to put the runners on. I remember we would all hide our sledges up in the church yard in the yew trees there.
81. A lot of the classes we went to, and things we did, were for the benefit of Aberlour. All the shoes would be mended in the cobbler's shop. I remember being placed there when they were short and there was work to be done. I resoled shoes and replaced the uppers on a whole load of shoes. They used us 'as needs must.' We were efficient

when catering for our own needs. It was only when it came to things like electrics when outside people were brought in.

82. Looking back, I think the quality of the education I received was very good. There were good teachers there. I still think to this day that Scotland had the best education system in the world back then. I have since lived in other countries and seen the level of education the children receive there. I don't think that level of education meets what I received at Aberlour.

Leisure time

83. We were kept busy during the week. The only time when we got leisure time was in the evenings or on Sundays. We used to have access to the sports equipment, things like footballs and cricket equipment, if the housemaster allowed it. The equipment would be locked away in a cupboard. We would have to prove to the housemaster that we had enough people involved to do whatever sporting activity it was. In the evenings we would either watch television, play board games or read. On Sundays we were only really allowed to read. I don't remember there being a whole lot of toys. I'm sure Aberlour had its own band that was wheeled out for various occasions, but I wasn't involved with that. Aberlour also put on pantomimes and various things like that for charity. I think the band played as part of those things.

Sport and athletics

84. We played games of cricket and football on the playing fields. I remember that we had days when we did athletics. The first thing you had to do on those days was run a mile. If I remember rightly you had to run that mile in six minutes and fifteen seconds. You were expected to beat that time every time you did sports. If you didn't manage that you would end up running all day. Some of the boys, because they were much older and fitter, would run that straight off the bat. After you achieved that speed, you went on to do other things like throwing the hammer, javelin or discus.

Religious instruction

85. Aberlour was religious. The whole place was based around religion. They pushed you into the Scottish Episcopalian faith. You had no choice in that. Religion is not something that has ever phased me. We had to go to church in the mornings on Sundays and in the evening for Evensong. Evensong was at 6:00 pm.
86. I remember the local [REDACTED] had a big staff with a brass ram's head on top. I don't remember his name. He would pick six children to sit in front of him and recite various things like the Lord's Prayer. If you got anything wrong, or stopped, he would smack you across your head with the staff. That happened to me on several occasions. All that put me off religion. I am a great believer that if a man of God has to smack you across your head with their staff, then there is either something wrong with what they are teaching or how they are teaching it.

Trips / holidays

87. We would go out to pick potatoes when it was the season to do that. We went to different places, but they were usually around about the Aberlour area. We would also go to Alyth or Blairgowrie to pick raspberries when the season was on. We were given 10% of what we earned for doing the picking. The money was put into an account for us to use as pocket money. If you weren't in trouble, you would receive that each Saturday. Looking back, I must have left a vast amount in my account when I left because I always was in trouble.
88. Every year we went on a vacation to Hopeman near Gordonstoun in Moray. The Sea Scouts had a base there on the Moray Firth which Aberlour used. Aberlour used the Sea Scouts' sports equipment to play various things on the beach. I remember that we used to swim in the sea and the swimming costumes were all knitted. You can just imagine the weight of your costume as soon as you hit the water. Because of that we would take them off. That would lead to us running around more or less naked.

Leave

89. I don't think we got to go home, or to visit relatives, at any time during both our times in Aberlour. However, you were able to go out for weekends more generally once you reached a certain age. You were allowed to do that if your homework and classwork was all up to date. I would go out camping with my friends. It was good because going on those trips allowed you to miss church. We used to go up to a place called The Reekie Linn which was a waterfall near Blairgowrie. We'd raid the kitchen before we went for food, but we mostly lived off the land. We would catch fish and find birds eggs to eat.

Birthdays / Christmas

90. I don't remember anything surrounding birthdays. I don't remember birthday cakes or anything like that. We might have received presents from relatives. If presents were sent in, you wouldn't necessarily receive them. Christmas was a non-event. There was a lot of church and, for a treat, you received an apple and an orange on Christmas Day.

Visits / Inspections

91. Aberlour was a self-sufficient and closed world. I don't recall our mother managing to visit us during our second trip to Aberlour. However, I do remember benefactors coming into Aberlour and being shown around. We were all dressed up in our best clothes for those visits. We had to be on our best behaviour but that was how you had to be all the time, visitors or otherwise, anyway.

Adoption / exploration of alternative care

92. My youngest brother, [REDACTED], spent time with a rich American couple who ended up wanting to adopt him. I remember that when it came to that sort of thing, my brothers, sisters and I were all of the same frame of mind. We wanted to stay together and, if

we were adopted, wanted to be adopted all together. I remember that all being talked about between us very early on during our time at Aberlour.

Telephone / letters / parcels

93. There wasn't a phone, but you could send and receive letters. I remember writing letters out and not being able to seal the envelope. You passed your letter and envelope to the housemaster to read and send. In my case that would have been Captain Henry. All that led to you not being able to write what was really going on at Aberlour in your letters. I suspect that if there was anything detrimental to the orphanage in your letter it would either have been censored or the letter wouldn't have been sent. I got the odd letter from my grandmother and my mother. You usually received the letter but there were times that the housemaster, Captain Henry, would read your letter out to you instead. On those occasions you didn't see the letter. I didn't know at the time why that was done. Looking back, it could be that something in the letter was being left out purposively when Captain Henry was reading them out.
94. You would always have to reply to all the letters and parcels you received. A lot of what we wrote were thank you notes. We were sent parcels, but we didn't always receive them. I remember writing thank you letters for parcels that I never received. I suspect that the logic surrounding not giving us our parcels was that, were they to have handed them all out, some children would have received fancy toys and others wouldn't have received anything. I think most children there wouldn't have received anything. Were all the parcels to have been handed out it would have just created animosity.
95. My youngest brother, [REDACTED], has memories of being sent nice presents by an American couple who wanted to adopt him. He told me that he would be called into a room to look at whatever was sent in for him. That was done purely so that he could write a thank you letter back. After seeing the present in the room, he would never see it again.

Healthcare

96. In the main, Aberlour were fairly good when it came to healthcare. They did take care of us. You were sent to the infirmary that was attached to our dorm if you were ill or injured. You would be taken care of there. I remember that Aberlour had a matron who would look after us but I'm not sure whether there was a doctor. The matron was the one who was mostly in charge of the infirmary. There were lots of times when you went to the infirmary to see the matron and she would just kick you out. She would just tell you that whatever it was would just heal.
97. I think once a year a dentist would come in from out of town to check our teeth. Everybody would line up outside of a room and we would go in. You would only get about a minute's worth of examination. You were asked whether you had toothache. If you said no, you were in and out.

Deaths

98. Sadly, I had two friends who died whilst I was in Aberlour. There was a road that went between the village and the church which was dead straight. We would sneak out during the night and use that road to ride the sledges that we had secretly made when it snowed. One of my friends, who I think was called [REDACTED] went down the road on his sledge and went straight into a holly tree. A branch went straight into his forehead and killed him.
99. I had a friend called [REDACTED] who was blind. We all had friendship groups and he was one of the boys who I was close to. I remember [REDACTED]'s thing in life was playing the mouth organ. He used to live and breathe it. For some reason I was out for the day which makes me think I would have been older. I might have been away camping at The Reekie Linn. When I came back to Aberlour I was told [REDACTED] had been taken to hospital and it wasn't expected that he was going to live. Sadly, he did end up passing away.

100. I later discovered that either plumbers or electricians had, for whatever reason, pulled up the corridor floor and left about a six foot deep gap underneath. A couple of boys had spitefully led [REDACTED] along the corridor, and he had fallen into the hole. Those boys did that purposively. I ended up confronting those boys and getting into a fight after discovering that. Those boys, in turn, reported me to BGF [REDACTED] to receive the belt. Of course, the boys themselves weren't punished.

Running away

101. I ran away from Aberlour on two occasions. They used to call it 'absconding' when it was referred to in Aberlour. Both the times I absconded were following incidents happening with Captain Henry. They all occurred during the second time I was at Aberlour. I think there were a few things going on which resulted in me running away. The first was a fear of being sexually abused. The other thing was the ongoing physical abuse I was suffering. Running away was a waste of effort. It was all moors around there and you would try to avoid the main roads. Eventually you would have to thumb a lift. That was when you would be caught. I remember that when I was caught it was the police who caught me.
102. The staff at Aberlour were severe with you when it came to disciplining you for absconding. After being returned to Aberlour you received the strap from your housemaster, the Dean, schoolteacher and the headmaster of the school. On top of that you were given all these other chores to do in the orphanage and in the school. I was on latrine duties for what felt like months, but it could well have been weeks. I would have to tidy up all the desks and clean the floors in my classroom. They really got to you with things like that.
103. I remember one of the chores I was given vividly because it was in the lead up to Christmas and the children were rehearsing a pantomime that was being put on. I think it was Aladdin. The chore I had been given was to clean a woodblock floor in the assembly hall. I did that with a couple of other boys. The hall was quite large and cleaning the floor took three weeks to complete. The first thing we had to do was scrape all the blocks with old knives. We then had to go over it with wire wool before

putting on the polish. Each of those tasks in themselves took a few days. I remember that my sister was in the pantomime and was rehearsing whilst we were doing all of that. That, in a way, made it all tolerable. At least she had one person who appreciated her performance.

Bed-wetting

104. I don't remember whether you could go to the toilet during the night. We must have been allowed to go. If I remember that correctly, it would have been the only reason we could leave our beds during the night. I was fine for a long time with bed-wetting at Aberlour. I didn't wet the bed at all during my first time there. I started wetting the bed after the incidents with Captain Henry. I kept on getting all these images in my mind. That was especially so after I became fully aware of Captain Henry taking boys out of their beds and seeing what the boys were like when they returned. That vision was always there when I was trying to sleep. I think, psychologically, that was what was causing me to wet my bed.
105. I don't recall anything being done to try to help you overcome your bed-wetting. I do remember that you used to get into a lot of trouble for doing it. Boys would try to conceal their sheets, but they were usually caught. Captain Henry would give you the strap if you were caught wetting the bed too often. He would just say that you had been too lazy to get up to go to the toilet during the night. The level of punishment you received depended on how serious it was. If you had just wet the bed and been discovered, then Captain Henry strapped you on your hand. If you were found to have tried to conceal it, Captain Henry would hit you hard across your backside. I remember having welts on my backside for weeks after being strapped by Captain Henry for wetting my bed.

Discipline at Aberlour

106. The place was run like what I imagine an army would be run. It was all queuing up and going to your assigned places. Amongst the kids we all had nicknames. Mine

was 'INX' and my brother's was ' '. It was the sort of place where we referred to each other like that. However, when it came to the staff, they tended to refer to you by your last name. I remember that the staff repeatedly made it clear that you should be grateful for what you were given, whether it be the food or the clothes on your back. They reminded you that if it wasn't for Aberlour you would be a waif and stray on the streets. Those things were said at any time. All the staff said those things to you. They just wanted you to appreciate what they were doing for you.

107. You weren't really allowed to speak to anybody. The staff just didn't like you conversing with anybody at all. You would be given a clip around the ear by the staff if they caught you speaking with anybody. The only times we were allowed to speak was if we were involved with fundraising and speaking to people who could make donations. That would either be at pantomimes we put on or during the two or three jumble sales we put on every year.
108. Corporal punishment was used quite a lot in Aberlour. There was always a line of boys outside the housemaster or SNR room waiting to receive the strap. You would get strapped if you were caught talking, swearing or saying something wrong about the church. You could receive it for lots of different things.

Abuse at Aberlour

109. Aberlour was well run, and I was well looked after. Most of the staff were good. They were kind and they cared for you. However, there was just the odd occasion when I stepped out of line and things happened with staff members. The staff weren't slow with using their hands in those days. You would get hit round the side or back of your head for swearing, talking out of turn or not eating what you were served. A slap to the head was used for anything you weren't supposed to be doing. I remember that most of the children were frightened to say anything out of line for fear of that happening.

110. Some of the staff were nastier than others. I don't really want to bad mouth anyone who I don't have firm memories about. The people I describe in this statement in detail are the ones who I consider as being particularly bad. I am only talking about incidents and events that I can remember for sure.

BGF

111. One of BGF's roles was to issue the strap when boys particularly misbehaved. He would issue that in his office. He was strict but I thought he was fair. In my experience though, he could let loose when things became a little too personal. I experienced one incident where he lost it. Unfortunately, I bore the brunt of that.
112. I was sent to see BGF after confronting the two boys who had led to the hole before he fell. I was sent there so that I could receive the strap. That was where you were sent if you did something particularly bad. I remember standing in amongst a line of boys outside of BGF's office. For some reason I said something about BGF's wife to another boy whilst we were waiting in the line. She had a and the boys used to call her ' or something like that. Whilst saying that I didn't see BGF's wife was behind me. She came behind me and cottoned on to what we were talking about. We weren't meant to be talking in the first place.
113. BGF's wife grabbed me by my ear and took me into BGF's office straight away. After entering the room, I was made to cross my hands over one another to receive the strap from BGF. BGF had three different types of belt that he used for the purposes of corporal punishment. The one that hurt the most was the one that he chose to use on me. I remember that BGF was standing on his tiptoes when he raised the strap so that he could create as much force as possible. I split my hands right at the moment when the strap was going to hit me. The belt came down and, because I had moved my hands, went straight through. BGF ended up hitting himself between his legs with the strap. He then came tearing after me with the strap. I was running around the office until BGF's wife caught me. BGF then proceeded to hit me every place he could with the strap. He hit me all over my body and head.

114. I was in the infirmary for two weeks following that incident. That's how they concealed what happened. I had welts all over my body and face. I was kept in there until all those marks disappeared. After that I was let out. At the time I felt I deserved to be punished for what I did. If you do something wrong, then you deserve a punishment. I suppose on reflection I can't blame BGF for the way that he responded after the way I behaved. Looking back from the age I am now, I can see where he was coming from and can understand his behaviour to a certain extent.

Captain Henry

115. Captain Henry would always come across as the staff member people particularly liked when visitors from the outside were shown around the home. However, to us, he was a mean staff member and a nasty piece of work. He was meaner than any staff member I had met before. It's strange because, at the same time, he wasn't always bad. He was quite nice to some of the boys. He just took a dislike to certain kids.
116. If you did something that any of the staff viewed as wrong, you got a slap across the side of your head. Captain Henry, however, used to hit you with his fists. He was free with his fists. He would punch boys with closed fists in their chest or abdomen. I think he did that so it wouldn't leave a visible mark. He was astute when it came to that sort of thing. There were never any other staff members present when he did these things. He was always particularly good at that. He would make sure that he was out of the line of sight of other people. He would always be on his own and his understudy would always be away doing something else.
117. I'm not saying that I didn't deserve to be disciplined in some way, however, Captain Henry's way of doing things was a little too much. He didn't seem to recognise what age the boy was when he was being physical with them. If Captain Henry took a dislike to you, you'd had it. Unfortunately, that was what happened with me. At a guess I would say that all started when I was about fourteen years old. There were a handful of boys he didn't like that he would physically assault. He would assault boys

repeatedly and sometimes for no reason at all. Boys could be walking along the corridor and he would just give them a side swipe as he passed.

118. I think that Captain Henry's dislike for me all stemmed from a time when he sat on the edge of my bed one night. He used to read stories to everyone in the dorm before he put the lights out. It would be a story out of a book, or he would recite something or other. He used to sit wherever he liked but this particular evening he chose my bed. Whilst reading the story, he put his hand under my covers to touch me. I shoved his hand away and pulled away. I don't know for sure whether it was the way I responded that led to Captain Henry starting to target me. However, that incident did seem to be the start of the period when he would punch me rather than just giving me a slap around the back of my head. Looking back, I do wonder whether refusing his advances was also the reason he picked upon certain other boys in the house as well.
119. The first occasion Captain Henry punched me was following an incident when I was arguing in the boot room with another boy. I think the argument was about an empty lemonade bottle. It was one of those glass bottles that you could take back to the store to get a refund. I had placed it down on a seat and another boy had picked it up and claimed it as his. Captain Henry crept up behind me and said something or other. By that time all the other boys, and Captain Henry's deputy, had left the room and were waiting outside ready to march in twos down to the village. Because I wasn't paying attention, Captain Henry turned me around and punched me with a closed fist right in my stomach. I wasn't expecting the punch and hit the floor. I remember not being able to catch my breath. He then started to stand on my chest and that's when I started to turn blue. He could see I was turning blue, so he stopped standing on me and started pushing on my chest to help me to breath. After starting to breath that was the end of things. I didn't see the matron after the incident.
120. The second incident I recall in detail was a time when Captain Henry caught me sliding down the bannisters. That was something boys just weren't allowed to do. Looking back at what I was doing, I was out of line. He grabbed me by the scruff of my neck and punched me with a closed fist in my chest or abdomen. For whatever reason, he chose to do that rather than going back to get his strap and giving corporal punishment.

That was what would normally happen when boys misbehaved like that. On that occasion, because I had experienced it before, I was able to pull away to a certain extent. Because of that I didn't receive the full force of his punch. After he punched me I crumbled to my knees. I just got up and got on with things.

121. After the incident where I was physically assaulted for sliding down the banister, Captain Henry punched me quite a few times further on other separate occasions. However, I don't recall all the incidents. He was quite free with his hands with me. I do remember stopping, looking out for him and trying to avoid him. I also saw him punching all the other boys in the group he targeted. I wasn't particularly friends with those other boys, but I knew them all.
122. I would see Captain Henry coming into the dorm after lights out and taking boys out of their beds. He would take those boys to his quarters. I used to duck under my covers and pretend to sleep when he came in. Most of the boys did that. I saw boys coming back into the dorm later crying. I never asked those boys what their concern was or why they were crying. We were all just trying to look after ourselves. Your frame of mind was "whatever is happening, at least it isn't happening to me." I didn't directly witness Captain Henry sexually abusing boys. However, looking back as an adult, I can only assume that he was molesting the boys in his quarters. Given the way the boys were when they returned into the dorm afterwards, I can't see what else could have been happening. It all was blatant. It doesn't take a lot of figuring out to work out what was going on.
123. Captain Henry was really the only nasty staff member that I met at Aberlour. BGF BGF used the strap and could be mean with it. However, at the end of the day, he was BGF hundreds upon hundreds of boys. He had to have some sort of deterrent. That was his job. Captain Henry was different in that way. I think that the way he acted was more out of malice. He really was in the wrong job. I got the impression when I was there that you really had to be nice to him to be left alone.

Reporting of abuse whilst at Aberlour

124. By the time I was at Aberlour I realised that it was a waste of time trying to report things. I knew that nobody would listen and instead you would be accused of making things up. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]. I just knew from my experience of dealing with the people who ran these types of places that reporting things wouldn't get you any further.
125. I was the sort of boy who would speak his thoughts. If ever you spoke your mind and that coincided with a staff member being present, whether that be a teacher, a housemaster or anybody else, you would know about it. Doing that would inevitably lead to some sort of punishment. Even when you said something to the minister at church it would get back to those that oversaw you. I remember times when the minister would act as if they were your friend and ask you whether you had any problems. They would ask you what was on your mind and coax stuff out of you. Inevitably, whatever you said would get back to your housemaster. Your housemaster would then just give you the belt for whatever it was that you had said.
126. I didn't understand why, when things were being reported, they weren't being taken seriously at the time. I do wonder whether those in charge of the homes I was in didn't listen because the places they worked in relied on charitable donations to operate. If something had got out, then that might have resulted in benefactors not contributing to the institutions. If that was the reasoning, then I can appreciate why it would have been necessary to keep everything quiet.

Leaving Aberlour and life before going to an approved school

127. I was happy to be leaving Aberlour when it came my time. A lot of children went on to the forces after leaving Aberlour. I think the military saw us all as easy pickings. The recruiters kept coming at me, but I kept refusing. I just didn't fancy going from one institution to another. Fortunately, my Auntie [REDACTED] had made an offer to take me in, so I was happy about that. I then went to live with her.

128. My Auntie [REDACTED] managed to get me a job at an engineering firm in Arbroath. I went in there as an apprentice draughtsman. I didn't have any qualifications so nobody at the firm knew how good I was at anything. When I first went to work for the firm, I spent most of my life working on the shop floor. I ended up having to arrive half an hour before everybody else each morning to set up all the different machines for the professionals coming in to start their day. I had to go to night school once a week to learn how to become a draughtsman. Over time I attended more classes at night school. All that felt a little bit like I was back in the orphanage.
129. I remember that during that time I was doing everything that was wrong. I was smoking and drinking. I ended up working at the engineering firm for a couple of years. I stuck it out because my Auntie [REDACTED] had gone out of her way to get me the job. I eventually decided that I didn't like doing what I was doing and left. At that time all the friends I had in Arbroath were all working on the fishing boats. My friends were all earning a lot more money than me and I decided that was for me.
130. I ended up attending trawling school in Aberdeen. I lived with a couple of other guys. That situation ended up being even worse than the situation I was in in Arbroath. I had no money at all because, until you got on the boats, you had to learn what you needed to do and weren't paid for that. We had no money and we were having to live hand to mouth. Myself, and a couple of other guys, ended up breaking into a place to get money and we were caught by the police. I got probation and was allowed to go out on the trawlers. I think I only managed to go out on a trawler once. That was up to the Faroe Islands. I was the lowest of the low on the boat. My job was to chip all the ice off the wheelhouse and to gut the fish. I was absolutely frozen. At the end of the trip all the crew chipped in to make sure I was paid for my work. I realised there and then that it was going to be a hard life if I stuck it out. That's when I decided to move back to Arbroath.
131. I remember that when I was under probation, I had a probation officer I was very wary of. I think he was called [REDACTED] and was in Arbroath. He kept going on about the orphanage, sexual abuse and all that sort of thing. He just kept going on about it all

too much. He was just trying to be friendly, but I had suspicions that other things were going on. In the end my thoughts about him were right. My brother, [REDACTED], got into trouble and ended up going through the justice system. He told me that that same probation officer molested him. I only discovered that much later in life from [REDACTED].

132. When I went back to Arbroath, I took a job as an apprentice bricklayer. I liked outdoor life and found the job fun. Unfortunately, I then ended up getting in trouble again. My cousin and I were using a rope hanging from a crane to swing out over a quay in Arbroath. It was one of the cranes that loaded the ships in Arbroath. My cousin came up with the bright idea of lowering the arm of the crane a little bit. He wanted to do that so that we could swing out over the quay further. Unfortunately, he didn't notice that the break was all chained when he moved the crane's arm. The arm came crashing down into the quay and the crane was destroyed. Thousands of pounds of damage was caused. Somebody had called the police when we started swinging on the crane so, when they arrived, we were immediately caught. That in turn led to me being sent to an approved school.

Wellington Farm School, Penicuik, Midlothian

133. I was seventeen when I was sent to approved school so I would have first gone to Wellington Farm either in 1964 or 1965. I was there for between a year and eighteen months so I would have left at some point before [REDACTED] 1967. I seemed to fit in famously at Wellington Farm. There was nothing different there to what I experienced at Aberlour. It was just another institution and that was what I was used to. In the end, I got through Wellington Farm and got out.
134. Wellington Farm isn't a place I have come forward to the Inquiry to particularly talk about. There were a lot of shenanigans that went on in there though. The punishments were just like Aberlour. I remember that there was a boy by the name of [REDACTED]. He was the bully of the place when I first arrived. I had a fight with him straight off the bat. I think he tried to get hold of some of the cigarettes I had been allocated and I retaliated.

135. A couple of months before boys were released from Wellington Farm they were allowed to go outside to work. I worked in a paper mill in Penicuik as a forklift truck driver. Through that I was mingling with people who came from normal family backgrounds. The only drawback was that it was only women who worked there. I remember that some of them could be worse than the guys. I think I got more interfered with at that paper mill than anywhere else. They would rib you quite a bit because you were the young kid on the block. It was what it was.

Life after leaving care

136. After leaving Wellington Farm I went back to working as a bricklayer in Arbroath. I took to it like a duck to water and felt that I was a pretty good bricklayer. I learnt how to read drawings and things like that. For me bricklaying was a good opportunity. A friend of mine then discovered that there was a lot more money to be earned doing bricklaying down in England. When I moved down to London there was a huge demand for bricklayers, and it did indeed pay a lot of money. We could earn the average weekly wage in a day, and we were in high demand. It was fantastic money. I ended up running my own business and had about seventy guys working for me. I got married, moved to Kent and went on to have two sons.
137. Unfortunately, there was then a big slump in the economy. I would have been in my thirties about that time and my marriage wasn't doing too well. Looking back, I think my wife was suffering post-natal depression and I didn't recognise it. In those days that wasn't something that was really heard of or talked about. I didn't know how to deal with it and just thought she had fallen out of love with me. I don't know what she was thinking at the time, but I just couldn't handle it anymore. I gave her the car, the house, paid maintenance and left the relationship. I would have been in my mid-thirties by that time. I keep in touch with my ex-wife and my two sons. I see my sons on the odd occasion.

138. I then moved to Germany. At that time, the economy in Germany was booming and they were desperate for contractors. I initially worked as a sub-contractor but ended up going in with someone else to set up a gang of good artisans. They were all carpenters, bricklayers and things like that. They were all people who really knew their business and were good. One day I would send them to Munich and the next day they would be in Hamburg. My job was to find the work and to supply the cars, transport and accommodation. It got to the stage where I was able to write my own cheques. I got paid anything I liked because there was so much demand for my guys.
139. It was all working out great in Germany until Presidents Reagan and Gorbachev came along and pulled down the Berlin Wall. Workers started pouring in from the East and suddenly there was no work for my men. Some of those guys that came in from the East were great. However, some of them were willing to work for a loaf of bread and a bottle of wine. I just couldn't compete with that. I went over to America a couple of times looking to find work so I could take my guys there. We ended up trying that out, but it was all mafia run. The mafia wanted their 10% for this, that and the other. I just couldn't make working across there feasible. After a period back in England when I had a long term girlfriend, I decided that I wanted to move. I liked America when I was across there and started thinking that it might be somewhere that I would like to live. I went for a vacation and landed in LA. I stayed in The Marriot Hotel and that was where I met my next wife. She was gorgeous. We were married for over fifteen years and her sons became my own.
140. Sadly, my wife died of cancer in 2010 which really floored me. I stayed in America for about six years after she passed away. I didn't have the heart to even move her cigarettes off the counter. It took me two years to begin making room in the closet. My sister, [REDACTED] and I then started talking. She had lost her husband and we decided to move in together in Spain. We stay in an apartment that our brother, [REDACTED], owns. [REDACTED] lives close by. I have a lady friend in America who I visit in San Diego. We have become good friends. I visit America when I can to see her, see my stepsons, grandchildren and to do my taxes. It all seems to be working quite well.

Impact

141. My time in care did have an effect on me. I suppose it does scar you on some level. I'm quite sure I could have done a lot different in my life. However, I don't know whether the choices I made are all down to growing up in care. I have no doubt that it affected me mentally in some way when I was there otherwise why would I have been running away from Aberlour. Looking back, there had to be a reason inside of me somewhere why I was doing that. I don't think so much about my time in care now, but I did a lot in my thirties and forties. It was always there. I do think you tend to forget the bad stuff and reflect more on the good stuff the older you get.
142. I was very anti-authority for a long time. I still am a little bit anti-authority. I am very cynical about the people who are in charge of this world and the laws that they make. The law historically was set up to protect the rich and it's still the same to this day.
143. I wasn't prepared all that well for adulthood when I left Aberlour. Aberlour didn't really prepare you for things like work and living as an adult. However, I would say that Wellington Farm did. They at least prepared you for the world of work through organising a job in Penicuik, or wherever, prior to leaving. In that way you were exposed to normal daily life. I think because of that I have managed to hold down work since leaving care.
144. I didn't learn about relationships in my childhood. That was what was missing all the way through. I think that had a vast effect on my relationships with my wives. It effected the way that I saw people around me. When I think back to my first marriage, I think I could have done a lot more than I did. I should have figured things out and thought that there was something behind the way that she had changed. I should have been taking her to a doctor, but I didn't. It wasn't something that was well known back then.
145. What was especially missing during my time in care was love. That's the one big thing that I reflect on. I didn't get shown any love and didn't give any myself. Showing love was very much seen as a weakness. It was as if you had to put a steel cage around

yourself when you were in care and that led to me finding it hard to show affection. That took a lot of dealing with after I left care. It took me many years to realise what had been going on. It's been a drawback in my life all the way through. I just couldn't see all of that in myself until someone showed me what was missing. I remember the topic coming up in my first marriage. I would just veer off onto a different subject if it came up.

146. My time in care has affected my relationship with my children. I was on my own for over twenty years in America without really seeing the rest of my family. Keeping in contact turned into an obligatory thing. The rest of my family almost became strangers to me. I don't want to be harsh on them but that is how it was. It was all about finding the love for them. I found it hard to show them that. I suppose a lot of it all was a form of self-protection. You didn't want to come across as a 'cry baby'.
147. I used to feel that I had been made stronger by the experiences I had had. I wouldn't have anyone talk to me, swear at me or anything else. I fought most of my youth in London. Being in care does toughen you in that way. I've been like that most of my life. I think that was why it was so comforting to move to America. I felt as if I wasn't threatened anymore and that I was free for the first time in my life. I felt there wasn't any institution that could harm me. I just felt I didn't have to fight my way out of situations anymore. I'd had enough of that during my time in Scotland, England and Germany.

Treatment and support

148. I've never ever thought about getting treatment or support for how my time in care impacted me. I've always been wary of seeking help from other adults.

Reporting of abuse after leaving care

149. I have talked about my experiences in care with my brothers and sisters, but I have never reported what happened to anyone official. The Inquiry is the first organisation I have spoken to about my time in care in any great depth.

Visiting Aberlour in adult life

150. I went to visit Aberlour with my sister. The orphanage itself had been torn down but the church was still there. I looked in the church's visitor book and saw my name. Everybody had their nicknames in brackets alongside their names. My nickname was marked as 'INX [REDACTED]' and my younger brother's nickname was marked as '[REDACTED]'.

Records

151. I have never recovered my records. I've never done anything like that, but I am sure that my siblings might have.

Lessons to be Learned

152. What is considered as abuse has changed over the years. Nowadays even raising your voice to a child would be considered abuse. What would be classed as abuse now would have been taken as granted when I was at Aberlour [REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be Slapping a child was just an everyday occurrence. I appreciate that things are a lot different now. Aberlour was very much run along Victorian lines. I was there during a time when they were just descending from Victorian lines to the new way of things. Looking back, I can now see how they needed to be strict. How else could they manage over six hundred children?

153. I don't want to criticise Aberlour because where else would those six hundred children have been if it hadn't of existed? Those children would have been on the streets. At the end of the day, at least we were getting fed. I would often think to myself whilst I was in care "where would I be if I wasn't here?" Even during the times I ran away, as I was crouching down in amongst the heather on the moors to keep warm, I would question whether being there was the better option. Half the time you were glad when the police picked you up and took you back. At least when you were back at Aberlour you had the certainty of knowing what you were going to be in for. In a way, you felt like you were being saved.
154. It wasn't all bad. On the other side of things, you could tell that there were people at Aberlour who cared about the kids. Most of the people who worked in Aberlour cared. Their heart was in the right place. It was just the odd rotten apple who spoiled it for everybody. I think that those sorts of people will always find a way to enable themselves to get into the positions they get into. I don't think that can be changed. That will happen no matter what the rules and regulations are.
155. I think it is sad that abuse is present in people's lives during their early childhoods. It is there for the rest of your life. It does make you look at the world and people differently. It does for sure change you mentally. I'm sure there are people who have gone through a lot worse than me. I know that is the case with my brothers and sisters. I'm sure the Inquiry hears some horrendous stories. Thankfully, I got through the system without it affecting me too much.
156. I know that a lot of the big institutions have gone and that most children are placed in foster care. I think that children are much more likely to receive love in a foster care family than the sort of places I went to. Who can love six hundred children in their care? Certain carers might feel closer to particular children, but they can't give it to everyone. I am glad that they have got rid of these big orphanages. Looking back, that can only be a good thing.

Hopes for the Inquiry

157. I do hope that the Inquiry has heard from other people who have been to Aberlour and Carolina House. If there is, I hope that my statement can help provide more consistency across statements and prevent things from being vague. I want the Inquiry to have a good picture of what went on. I hope that the statements will help the Inquiry see the cracks.
158. I don't know what the Inquiry is going to do with my evidence. I just hope that my evidence can help children in the future who find themselves in care. The one thing I know was missing in my experience was love. These institutions can give you all the food and clothes that they like but it will never compensate for the lack of love. That was what was missing in my life. I didn't realise that for a long time. Not receiving love is a big void in your life if it is absent. Everybody needs love in their life.
159. I have no objection to my witness statement being published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed. .....

Dated. 05 July 2023.....